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ABSTRACT

A study examined the news coverage given by the "Industrial Worker" to the San Diego free speech fight of 1912, the last of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) union's free speech fights on the West Coast. The "Worker," a publication of the IWW, devoted columns of coverage to that conflict in the form of reports, letters, editorials, cartoons, poems, and songs. Three kinds of identification with class were particularly notable in that coverage: identification with class struggle, identification with specific causes in the conflict, and identification of particular types of action that needed to be taken in order for victory to be won. To the IWW the San Diego free speech fight was one more skirmish in the continuing warfare between classes. In that war and in a variety of ways, the "Industrial Worker" sought to "agitate, educate, and organize" its readers by appealing to their consciousness of the status and the concerns they shared with other memebers of the working class. It was that kind of identification which, in turn, was crucial both to the IWW's efforts in recruiting workers for the One Big Union and to its goal of a worker-dominated society.
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THE INDUSTRIAL WORKER AND ITS RHETORIC: WORKING CLASS IDENTIFICATION IN THE SAN DIEGO FREE SPEECH FIGHT OF 1912

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
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Social history has been enriched significantly in recent years by the expansion of research into working class culture. Labor historians and others have broadened their perspective beyond the narrow concentration on trade union movements which characterized earlier histories of workers, and have begun to examine a variety of aspects of working class life and culture.[1] From attention to labor institutions and movements, they have turned to an examination of the workers themselves--"the individually inarticulate, undocumented, and obscure"[2]--in an attempt to write "history from the bottom up."

Working class culture remains, however, a relatively untapped area for communication historians. Our field, in other words, needs its own "history from the bottom up," focusing on communication affected by, and reflective of, working class people.

One place to start is with publications directed at working class audiences, dealing with working class concerns. Some steps in this area have already been made. Notable among them was William Ames' study of the way in which the industrialized press of the early twentieth century failed to give access to radical, minority points of view in labor disputes of that era, a condition which led to the founding of several radical publications in the West.[3]

This paper examines in greater detail the coverage available in one such publication--the Industrial Worker, established in 1909 in response to the lack of access given by local establishment newspapers to the ideas and issues underlying the Industrial Workers of the World's free speech fight that year in Spokane, Washington.[4] The focus in this paper is on the Worker's coverage of the last of the I.W.W.'s major free speech fights on the West Coast--the San Diego free speech fight of 1912. The intention is to use that publication's coverage of that incident as a text

from which can be gleaned insights into the working class movement which supported the Industrial Worker.

The discussion below traces the evolution of certain class-oriented appeals throughout the Worker's treatment of the San Diego situation. Each involved the invocation of some sort of identification on the part of the Worker's readers. Each of these, in turn, implied a larger identification: with the goals and values of the I.W.W. as a working class movement opposing the values and institutions of the "employing class."

Three kinds of identification were particularly notable in the Worker's coverage of the San Diego free speech fight. First was identification with class struggle, either through direct references to workers as a class set apart from, and exploited by, employers; or through the many depictions of violence or of oppressive actions against workers and others on the I.W.W.'s side in the free speech battle, perpetrated by police, citizens' vigilante groups, or other establishment agencies. Those incidents of violence or oppression were usually portrayed as manifestations of the class struggle--actions taken by the employing class against their antagonists, the working class.

A second type of identification invoked by the Worker was with specific causes in the conflict. In this category were references to the rights of free speech and assembly, and the rights of labor, each of which the I.W.W. felt it was upholding in its battle with San Diego authorities.

Finally, there was identification of particular types of action that needed to be taken--calls for labor solidarity in the struggle, for workers to march on San Diego to join the fight, for money to help underwrite the efforts of those actively engaged in the battle, especially those involved in the court trials which, inevitably resulted from the

confrontation with police in street meetings.

I. THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT: BACKGROUND OF THE FREE SPEECH FIGHT IN SAN DIEGO

The I.W.W. and Its Free Speech Campaigns. There is, of course, no dearth of histories of the Industrial Workers of the World, or of the various free speech fights in which the I.W.W. was involved during the first two decades of the twentieth century.[5]

The "Wobblies" saw labor issues of the early 1900's in terms of a class struggle. Their goal was to organize all workers--skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled--into "One Big Union" and to replace capitalist society in America with one controlled by workers. Founded in 1905, the I.W.W. emerged from an initial period of intramural squabbling with a philosophy advocating class solidarity, direct action against industrial employers in the form of general strikes, and various kinds of non-violent sabotage.[6]

Key to the Wobblies' efforts to organize unskilled and transient workers, especially on the West Coast, were the street corner gatherings in the so-called "slave market" sections where those workers could be found. Those gatherings, in turn, led officials in various cities to pass ordinances controlling street speaking and loitering in areas where I.W.W. efforts were concentrated. The result was a series of confrontations in which the I.W.W. disobeyed those laws on grounds that the street meetings were protected by the constitutional rights of free speech and assembly. In all, it is estimated that there were at least 26 I.W.W. free speech battles, 20 of them in the years between 1909 and 1913.[7] Some of the most publicized confrontations were in Spokane, Fresno, California and San Diego.

In San Diego, battle was joined after local merchants pressed the

City Council into passing an ordinance which created a 49-block "restricted district" where street speaking would be prohibited.[8] The district covered "E" street between Fourth and Fifth Avenues, for years the city's "Soapbox Row," where evangelists, Salvation Army preachers, socialists, Wobblies and others spoke to whatever crowds would gather to listen to them.

In November, 1911, apparently urged on by Harrison Gray Otis, the conservative, anti-union publisher of the Los Angeles Times, and by officials of the Los Angeles Merchants and Manufacturers Association, there developed a concern among San Diego businessmen over the I.W.W.'s street gatherings in San Diego. In December, 1911, therefore, a petition was presented to the San Diego Common Council, signed by merchants and property owners, calling for the prohibition of street speaking within an area that included Soapbox Row. Despite a counter-petition opposing the ordinance, the Council passed the law January 8, 1912. The stated rationale for the ordinance was for the "preservation of the public peace," and to control traffic.

The law was to go into effect immediately, but police delayed enforcement for thirty days, during which time representatives of the press, as well as businessmen and other citizens, debated the widsom of the restriction on street speaking. Not surprisingly, socialists, Wobblies and others affected by the ban were prominent among those organizing against it. Their efforts led to the formation of the California Free Speech League January 16, 1912.

The delay in enforcement did not last long, however. One month after the ordinance was passed--on February 8--the Free Speech League held a parade and demonstration within the restricted area, and the police moved in on the crowd. Forty-one persons were arrested and jailed that night, and more were jailed in the ensuing week. When speakers began to address

crowds gathered outside the restricted area, the Common Council responded by passing a "move on" ordinance, authorizing arrests for the blocking of traffic on city streets.

In the months which followed, the pattern of confrontation between the I.W.W. and other radicals on the one hand, and police and local citizen groups on the other hand, was typical of free speech battles elsewhere. Those who were challenging the ordinance did so by urging their fellow workers throughout the nation to come to the scene of the confrontation, by continuing to hold meetings, submitting to arrest, and clogging the judicial machinery of the city by insisting on coming to trial one by one.[9]

On the other side of the conflict, as in other cities, police violence and vigilante actions became issues. Police allegedly responded to street meetings by sometimes beating some of the participants, and on at least one occasion by using fire hoses to spray a crowd in order to disperse it. Meanwhile, a citizens' vigilante committee was formed, and was said to be responsible for removing Wobblies and other radicals from jail, transporting them to the county line and beating them. Vigilantes were also charged with meeting incoming protestors at the county line and giving them the same brutal treatment.

Whether or not all of these charges were true, two I.W.W. followers apparently did die as a result of police aggressiveness--one after a beating in jail, the other during a police raid on I.W.W. headquarters. And when Harris Weinstock conducted a special investigation of the situation on behalf of California Governor Hiram Johnson in April, 1912, he was strongly critical of vigilante actions, likening them to tactics used in Czarist Russia.

In two other government investigations of the problem officials looked for instances of I.W.W. violence. (The Wobblies had been accused

by citizen groups of conspiracies to dynamite, and of plans to commit assault.) No firm evidence of I.W.W. violence was found in those investigations. In one, however--an inquiry by State Attorney General Ulysses S. Webb--San Diego was threatened with intervention by the state militia if local officials couldn't control the vigilante situation.

However hotly contested it was, the San Diego free speech fight eventually faded away. Street speaking confrontations in the city became less frequent, because of police and vigilante actions and because Wobblies and other radicals turned their attention to other battles and other issues. By the summer of 1914, the I.W.W. could hold street meetings again, even though it wasn't until 1915, when anarchist Emma Goldman was allowed to speak in San Diego, that free speech was genuinely restored.[10] In the meantime, the I.W.W.'s San Diego local--never a large chapter--had become even less visible.

With the inconclusiveness of the outcome in San Diego, the wisdom of continuing to engage in free speech fights became debatable within the ranks of the I.W.W. Those who felt the union should devote more of its efforts to organizing workers, and less energy to symbolic protests, felt that the free speech fights were debilitating.[11]

The Industrial Worker. Especially during the period before 1913, the Industrial Worker was an important reflection both of the issues and of the events affecting the I.W.W. The paper covered matters of concern to western locals of the union and, in that connection, its attention to the free speech fights was particularly notable. But western events were not the only ones to receive coverage. Such obviously important developments as the textile strike in Lawrence, Massachusetts and the accompanying trial for murder of Joseph Ettor and Arturo Giovannitti also received prominent display. The paper's editorial page, meanwhile, commented on

and articulated issues and goals crucial to the I.W.W. and discussed the significance, in class warfare rhetoric, of other matters challenging the union. Also an important part of the total package of ideas and comment were letters from correspondents and other contributions by well-known socialists and other radicals. The Industrial Worker, in other words, was both a bulletin board for reporting I.W.W. activities, and a forum for commenting on and interpreting the battles and the issues impacting on the union.

During the San Diego free speech battle, Walker Smith was editor of the Worker. Smith was an interpreter of I.W.W. doctrine who later used the paper to discuss such issues as the I.W.W.'s espousal of industrial sabotage, and to advocate a decentralized structure (or participatory democracy) for the I.W.W.[12] At the height of the San Diego conflict, Smith devoted several columns of coverage to it, in the form of reports, letters, editorials, occasional cartoons, and admonitions in the "ears" of the paper's front page, urging workers to join their fellow Wobblies in San Diego.

It should be remembered, however, that the spring and summer of 1912 were eventful times for the I.W.W. elsewhere in the nation. At about the time that the troubles started in San Diego, the free speech fight in Aberdeen, Washington was just winding down, and a similar battle was underway in Vancouver, B.C. As mentioned above, the Lawrence textile strike was perhaps the major labor dispute of this era. All of these were given prominent display in the Worker. At the same time, extensive coverage was also given to a lumber workers' strike at Grays Harbor, Washington, a railroad construction workers' fight against the Canadian Northern Railroad, and a construction workers' strike against Grand Trunk Pacific. Coverage of the San Diego situation thus was within a total context of

news and comment about a variety of incidents and issues. The rhetoric in the Worker's attention to the San Diego battle, however, may be isolated as representative of the way the paper treated other issues and events.

II. ANALYSIS OF THE TYPES OF APPEAL IN THE INDUSTRIAL WORKER'S COVERAGE OF THE SAN DIEGO CONFLICT

Identification with the class struggle. Attention to the San Diego situation in the Worker was greatest between the time when the free speech ordinance began to be enforced--in February, 1912--until the fall of that year, when other events shoved the San Diego conflict from the paper's columns. Before February, however, there had been references to the problem as it began to develop, starting at about the time that the merchants' petition to the San Diego Common Council was presented in December, 1911. Even in those early references, there were appeals to workers' consciousness of themselves as a class at odds with police, merchants and others associated with the San Diego establishment. As was particularly the case later in the battle, violence against workers and those who identified with them was evidence of the employing class's interest in provoking class warfare.

In the December 7, 1911 issue of the Worker, for example, the paper's correspondent reported that socialists, Wobblies and members of the A.F. of L. had united in a parade and rally, with the parade line-up numbering about 3,000. Police aggressiveness was noted:

> The police tried to "start something" all last week and succeeded in getting a couple of our fellows arrested, on a "DRUNK AND RESISTING" charge.[13]

Identification with class status was also apparent in this report:

> ...the slaves are beginning to line up here and the only danger is that we may become "respectable citizens"...[14]

Intensive coverage of the conflict began with a front page article in the paper's February 8, 1912 issue, entitled "UNEMPLOYED INVADE SAN DIEGO," in which police assaults on radical speakers were described, referring to events just before the free speech ordinance began to be enforced. The class warfare theme was again sounded:

> The employing classes have produced these homeless, jobless, hungry men and they will be forced to deal with them.[15]

Reports of conflict resulting from enforcement of the ordinance did not begin until the February 15 issue, when events of the evening of February 8 were described. In a communique from the San Diego local's Press Committee, headed "FIGHT ON IN SAN DIEGO," the history of the free speech ordinance was reviewed, as were events in earlier street meeting confrontations between the police and I.W.W. members. The paper's description on the one side evoked images of a large working class unified to combat the ordinance; and on the other side, of police and merchants harassing innocent people:

> The news soon spread and a great crowd gathered. The stool pigeons and police began to jostle and otherwise intimidate and incite the immense crowd that had gathered to witness the antics of law and order on foot and in autos trying to incite a riot. Between nine and ten o'clock the over-anxious police began to get angry and redoubled their efforts to incite the good natured and curious crowd. Unable to get trouble thrust upon them, they began singling out individuals.[16]

The Press Committee concluded with

> Meanwhile, we are on the eve of an inglorious back-down on the part of the M & M.ized police power--or a battle to be added to the long list of campaigns for freedom in our time. Yours for the One Big Union.[17]

By February 22, the portrayals of police and other officials had become more bitter, and the appeals to other workers to join the battle had become more intense. Under the headline, "SILLY SAN DIEGO FIGHTS I.W.W.," the Worker described the 90 arrests which had taken place to

that point, and decried as "filthy" the jail conditions to which those arrested were subjected. It was, by the article's account, a battle between the working class and those of the employing class who were reluctant to let laborers organize to defend themselves:

> Of those who have been arrested there are 48 persons who are charged with criminal conspiracy against the California state laws. The application of this charge to the prisoners shows that the employing class are not allowing any technicalities to keep them from protecting their ill-gotten gains....As usual the fight resolves itself into a test of power and it rests upon the toilers of the world to show the master class that in the final analysis we, and we alone, possess the power to operate affairs.[18]

The rhetoric in the Worker's indictment of the employing class could be vituperative to an extreme:

> When the workers are awakened so they deal equitably as man to man they will have no need of delving into the pasts for precedent or listening to ponderous, musty, meaningless Latin phrases from the lips of the satyr-sensed satellites of the capitalist class.
>
> As for stopping us we are the useful members of society and you the useless. The useful persists and the useless decays and dies.[19]

And, as "A Hobo Writer" noted in the March 14 issue of the Worker, the goal of class struggle was not accommodation, but revolution:

> As for my part I congratulate these physical brutes for their actions as this will make a speedy end of the ruling class, especially in America, where it seems to be a universal epidemic to put men of physical superiority over the people with clubs and guns in their hands, as they do not want people with a healthy brain, but rather have them healthy in body and crippled in brain, so they may not realize whether or not the orders of the master class are beneficial to humanity, and therefore follow the orders of their masters blindly. They will find out some day and in the very near future, that the brain of the workers will be able to handle all those physical brutes with ease.[20]

As the struggle continued, violence became more and more the focal point for appeals to working class identification. The I.W.W. effort was aided by tragic events, as two men became martyrs to the free speech cause during April and May. One was Michael Hoey, a 65-year-old laborer

who died in April of injuries allegedly suffered when he was beaten by police guards after being jailed for participating in a free speech meeting. In May, Hoey was joined in martyrdom by Joe Mikolasek,[21] shot by police during a raid on I.W.W. headquarters. According to police, Mikolasek reached for an ax to attack one of the officers leading the raid, and the officer fired on Mikolasek in self-defense. According to the I.W.W., however, Mikolasek was fired upon before he made any move, and only reached for the ax in his own self-defense after he had been wounded.

Throughout April, the characterizations of police and vigilante violence were strong, beginning April 4 with two front page articles in which police or vigilante brutality were described. In "LIBERTY IS DEAD IN SAN DIEGO," several violent incidents were mentioned, while, in a separate story, "POLICE COMMIT MURDER IN SAN DIEGO," the death of Michael Hoey was briefly reported. Elsewhere in the April 4 issue, a vigilante attack on I.W.W. members Joseph Marko and four others was highlighted. In these accounts, and in other reports of police action during April, the I.W.W. slogan "An Injury to One is An Injury to All" was repeatedly used.

The I.W.W. wasn't fighting the battle alone. That, in any case, seemed to be the message as the Worker told of the number of workers on their way to join the battle in San Diego, and described sympathetic protests in Los Angeles. But the murder of Hoey made the Worker's tone more threatening than it had been in the past, as it agitated in an editorial April 18:

> In stopping street speaking the act was but an unconscious effort to protect your position in society, to retain your place by licking your masters' hands, but in committing murder you stepped beyond the bounds of all forgiveness on the part of the aroused workers.[22]

The Michael Hoey murder had become the focus of the Worker's reportage by the April 11 issue, when more information had become available. Hoey's funeral was the occasion for a demonstration by I.W.W. members and other sympathizers, and Laury Payne Emerson's effusive eulogy was filled with revolutionary rhetoric:

> Our fellow worker was a hero in the strife. The army with which he marched are not mounted, booted, nor spurred neither do they carry arms; but from Maine to California their camp fires are burning, and from ocean to ocean the world over their banner floats. What army is this? The grand army of organized labor. They hope to win, not by taking up arms, but by laying down tools... That army is entrenched and its recruits fast being mustered wherever wage slaves bend beneath their burdens: wherever capitalism has laid its withering hand. They hope to win peaceably, but if that be not possible, no matter, they will win. They must.[23]

Early in March, meanwhile, the San Diego Tribune, a strongly anti-I.W.W. newspaper owned by businessman John Spreckels, had commented belligerently, with reference to those contesting the free speech ordinance, that "Hanging is none too good for them, and they would be much better dead."[24] Excerpts from that editorial were reprinted in an April 11 Worker editorial, with the admonition to "Clip this out and read it to every wage slave you can get to listen."[25]

In the April 18 issue of the Worker, more violence was highlighted, following the kidnapping and release of Abram Sauer, editor of the San Diego Herald, a paper sympathetic to workers in their free speech fight. Readers of the Worker were also reminded of vigilante actions against men arriving by train to lend their support to the I.W.W. effort (with one article claiming that two men had been murdered in one such episode of vigilantism). Despite such incidents of violence, however, the Worker's tone was optimistic, as was the letter from "Stumpy," their San Diego correspondent, who insisted "WE ARE ON THE WINNING SIDE!" As evidence, he cited the response of crowds at meetings supporting the free

speech fight, and claimed that the battle was affecting the price of real estate in San Diego.

In May, violence continued to be a peg on which many of the appeals to class consciousness could be hung. May 16, the first account of the May 7 death of Joe Mikolasek appeared. That topic was picked up again in the May 23 issue, in more intense descriptions of police and vigilante actions against I.W.W. members, in several re-tellings of the Mikolasek murder and of the events leading up to it, and in an editorial memorializing Mikolasek. The story continued May 23 and May 30, and in items describing Mikolasek's funeral (the occasion for yet another demonstration by radicals). Anarchist Emma Goldman delivered the funeral oration.

In the May 23 issue, meanwhile, brief reference was made to an incident which had occurred May 14, involving Goldman's business manager and companion, Ben Reitman. That incident was covered in a more detailed front page article May 30, and in Reitman and Goldman's personal description of the incident in the June 6 issue. According to those accounts, Goldman and Reitman had arrived in San Diego for a speaking engagement. Goldman was met by what she described as a "howling mob," forcing her departure from town by train. Reitman, separately, was taken by vigilantes to the edge of town, stripped almost naked, and tarred and feathered. The letters "I.W.W." were burned on his back with a hot wire, and he was left to find his way back to San Diego clad only in underwear.

In the May 30 issue, a vigilante attack on the printing plant of the San Diego Herald was also described, an attack which led the Herald to move its printing facilities out of San Diego. Meanwhile, the Worker's report on the findings of the Weinstock inquiry, which was critical of vigilante actions, again gave the paper an opportunity to review its grievances against police and other officials, including such recent incidents of

violence as the Mikolasek murder.

In an article describing Emma Goldman and Ben Reitman's experiences in San Diego, the class struggle theme was reiterated.

> Anyhow the whole state of California is stirred up over this San Diego free speech (fi)ght. Spreckles Call in San Francisco and his papers in San Diego have done all they could to stir this mess into a patriotic stew, but the whole working class of every brand of organization is on to the game, and knows it is a class struggle. This fight is the greatest thing that ever happened in California to promote class consciousness. Everybody is asking what is the I.W.W. Let the good fight go on. All we need is to capture the workers' mind, when we have that we have all. And one of the best ways to capture it, is to make the capitalist press advertise what we stand for. All activities lead to revolution. Peace and submission is our greatest enemy at this stage of the game.[26]

At the end of June and the beginning of July, the themes of police and vigilante brutality were foremost in the Worker, as the paper described recent actions against street speakers and charged officials with malfeasance in law enforcement. The tone of the Worker reports was apparent in the headlines:

"OUTLAWS RULE IN SAN DIEGO" (June 27, p. 1);

"THE COSSACKS REGIME IN SAN DIEGO" (June 27, p. 3); and

"CLUB AND FANG SAN DIEGO'S LAW" (July 4, p. 1).

In the "Club and Fang" article, the hope of an I.W.W. victory was raised again, "We are still in the ring, and getting stronger all the time,"[27] despite yet another round of attacks by police and vigilantes at street meetings. Meanwhile, the July 11 report of a mass meeting became a vehicle for a renewed complaint against the "move on" ordinance. The conflict was still portrayed, by one of the speakers at the meeting, as "At heart a plain issue between the master class and the masses that the master class preys upon."[28]

Identification with specific causes. Interwoven with appeals to class consciousness were references which invoked an awareness of some of the

issues involved in the free speech fight. The Worker periodically educated its readers about the significance of those issues, or reminded them of the specific rights that were at stake.

In February, for example, the Worker noted that the men arrested in the early confrontations between workers and police were standing up for an important principle:

> The men are not breaking any state laws but are simply exercising their rights and an unconstitutional city ordinance is in conflict with free speech.[30]

Later, the right of free speech was tied to the rights of labor.

> ...the contest in San Diego is not merely a fight for the right to speak upon the street but the very life of labor is involved. It is but the boast of the M. and M. that "We will never rest in our efforts until every vestige of union labor is wiped from the Pacific Coast," taking active form.[31]

By March 21, the Worker was offering an interpretation of the significance of the I.W.W.'s free speech fights which placed those confrontations clearly within the framework of the larger struggle:

> The fights for free speech conducted by the I.W.W. throughout the American continent have a greater meaning than appears upon the surface. They signify a distrust of legal methods of obtaining redress for wrongs inflicted upon a slave class.
>
> In these fights the workers do not stand upon their "constitutional rights" for they are aware of the fact that they have no rights save those which their organized power enforces. True, they may use the phrases during the progress of the battles but merely as a means of showing the rest of the workers the folly of relying upon phrases written upon musty pieces of parchment by slave holding labor skinners of the past. Neither do the workers hold jury trials in high regard for one of the prerequisites for jury service is property holding and property owners as a class are opposed to the proletaire. This is demanded to show the farcical nature of trials in capitalist courts by juries of their "peers." It piles up the expense, incidentally, and reaches the tenderest spot of Capitalism, the pocketbook.
>
> The principal point in all these fights is seen when the settlement takes place for then it is that the master class with all their power are forced to deal with the workers, not as individuals, not as part of capitalist society, but as a new power.

> The propertiless toilers are creating their own system of ethics and morals; are making their own rules and regulations; are building their own destinies and are the dominant factor in the great change about to take place.[32]

In April, readers were reminded of the organizational importance of street speaking, in an article summarizing speeches given at a protest meeting at the Building Trades hall:

> Without street speaking the migratory worker could not be reached, because he would not go to any hall. Without street speaking there would have been no organization among the lumber workers and section laborers and therefore no strikes or rights for better conditions. In street speaking pamphlets, circulars and propaganda sheets are given out and find their way to camps where they do their work.[33]

But, as another speaker had warned his audience at that same meeting, it was still a fight on behalf of all of labor:

> If the workers in San Diego in their fight for free speech lose, they will lose all along the line on the Pacific Coast. That city has been deliberately chosen by the Merchants and Manufacturers Association to fight the I.W.W. on account of its isolation.[34]

May ended with an extended reminder that the battle linked both free speech and the rights of workers to organize:

> What was a Free Speech Fight here two months ago has now become something of far graver importance to the working class of the world. That the fight in San Diego was setarted (sic) as the next step after making a scab town of Los Angeles is an established fact. The fight was forced on us here by the Merchants and Manufacturers' Association for the express purpose of getting rid of all forms of labor organization in San Diego, and with the intention of extending the fight on up the Pacific Coast, until there should be no labor organization west of the Rocky Mountain to protect the worker from the greed of the master.[35]

In June, the possibility of defeat began to be hinted at in the Worker's reports, although that possibility was quickly dismissed with talk of victory if union members would unite. Most notable, however, was the continued emphasis on the theme that the plot was aimed at all workers, not just I.W.W. members. And, on the front page of the June 6

issue, in an article headed "A Damnable Plot Against Workers," the Worker's correspondent linked free speech with class warfare:

> On the surface, the Free Speech Fight is becoming more calm and the less spectacular. Apparently the vigilantes have every I.W.W. man driven out of San Diego or forced into hiding. Business is again seated on her throne, while her devotees chase the elusive sucker.
>
> But deep down in the causes of things the Social Revolution is gaining force, a force that is all the more irrestible (sic) for its very calmness. The might import of the struggle that is now being waged here between the workers and the masters is as yet seen by the nation of toilers as but a faint glimmer of the class struggle in their daily lives.[36]

By now, in other words, the appeals to class identification and references to the struggle between classes were obviously joined to identification with the specific causes in the conflict. Victory in the free speech fight would also translate into a victory with far larger meaning for all members of the working class:

> The winning of this free speech fight means the organization of the toilers into closer combinations and finally into ONE BIG UNION. It means the gaining of economic control. It means a step toward liberty.[37]

Identification of actions needed for victory. Also an important part of the Worker's treatment of conditions in San Diego were calls for specific behavior that would unify workers against those they felt were oppressing them. The most notable appeals were requests for money, and requests for other working men to march on San Diego to join the battle. Class consciousness and labor solidarity, meanwhile, were also involved as part of the calls to action. In the February 22 issue of the Worker, a letter from Jack Whyte of the San Diego local appealed to the broader community of workers:

> The boys sent me out on bail for the purpose of making this appeal. They said "Tell the boys throughout the country that we will fight to the finish."
>
> WILL YOU HELP THEM
>
> We need MEN and money.

> There is no place in the world that has a more beautiful climate than San Diego. Let the TOURISTS roll in.
> On behalf of the men who are in jail I appeal to you for assistance. HOLD PROTEST MEETINGS. SEND MEN AND FUNDS.
> Help save local No. 13 from defeat.
> Today we need you. Tomorrow you may need us.
> All winter we have stood by the workers who were in trouble. Now it is our turn.[38]

A week later, under the heading "AID SAN DIEGO," the Executive Committee of the Free Speech League repeated the class warfare theme, and suggested appropriate action:

> All we can hope to do it (sic) to compel the enemy by Extra Legal Means, to forego the legal nonsense by which they hope to enmesh us. The ordinary means of public action are blocked by the newly formed Citizens' Alliance.
> ... If you help us win you will lessen the force of the attack upon yourselves. Agitate against the San Diego Fair. Boycott San Diego goods.. Keep all union men away except those who are near and are willing to go to jail.
> For the first time this fight is without equivocation. No isms nor osophies: only one situation: worker against shirker![39]

Meanwhile, descriptions of jail conditions reinforced the images of the police as brutal and repressive. The way to victory, according to the Worker, was to clog the jails, and create an intolerable expense for the city:

> The principal expense falls upon San Diego, however, and every active fighter of the class struggle should repair to the firing line so as to pile up the expense and thus end the fight.[40]

Socialist J. Edward Morgan invoked both class consciousness and the need for action in an emotional letter appearing March 14 under the heading "ACT! DAMN YOU! ACT!"

> Listen! You men of red blood! I am not an I.W.W. I am a member of the Socialist Party. But the I.W.W.'s are the ones slated to be wiped from the map. The police have sworn it. They have threatened horsewhipping--even killing. Nearly 200 of your men are already in their bastile. They threaten to make an example of these men. They swear they will show Spokane, Fresno, Kansas City, Aberdeen how to handle the "Damn Tribe" that ought to be "wiped out of existence." Do you get it! Do you get it! Damn your red-blooded, rebellious livered souls, get on the job! Get on the job! San Diego! San Diego! It is the only place on the may (sic) for you. Get busy men! Get busy locals! Money and

men! Men and money![41]

By the end of March, the Worker was reminding its readers again that the fight had consequences for all of labor, because the prospect of victory for the I.W.W. was a threat to those in power:

> The growing solidarity of the wage workers has frightened the masters of the bread and they hope to make this fight a means of stopping the workers from voicing their opinions in public.[42]

The call to action to other workers remained urgent. In a banner headline across page one in the March 28 issue, the Worker's readers were enjoined,

WANTED NOW! 100 MORE MEN TO GO TO SAN DIEGO! ARE YOU A MAN?[43]

April marked the month when the San Diego situation was covered most extensively in the Industrial Worker. In one issue alone (April 25), there were 17 separate items (articles, letters, editorials and blurbs), a total made more striking by the fact that, in all of the Worker's coverage before April, the highest single issue total was six (in the February 15 and March 21 issues). By comparison, there were eight items in the Worker's April 4 issue, 11 in the April 11 edition, and six April 18. There was similarly heavy coverage in May, although much of May's total appeared in the May 23 issue, when there were 14 separate items about the San Diego battle.

Why the great amount of attention to San Diego during those two months? There are undoubtedly many reasons, but an important one may be that, on both sides of the dispute, this was a pivotal period. The jailings, trials and the controversy developing over vigilante activities were becoming burdensome to the city of San Diego, and consequently a prolonging of the fight had to be a concern to police and government officials there. On the I.W.W. side the toll taken by vigilante action, the number of I.W.W. members and sympathizers who were in jail, and the fact that an

"unwinnable" battle might turn Wobblies and other radicals from San Diego, made these months a time when victory--or the prospect of victory--had to be achieved.

The I.W.W. resolve to win was stressed in a communique from the California Free Speech League, which issued yet another call for men to march on San Diego:

> UNEMPLOYED OF AMERICA: MARCH ON SAN DIEGO. JOIN THE ARMY OF TEN THOUSAND MARCHING FROM SAN FRANCISCO; JOIN THE MARCH OF THE HUNGRY. GO TO SAN DIEGO. DEMAND YOUR RIGHT OF FREE SPEECH. DEMAND BREAD; DEMAND FREEDOM. YOU ARE NOT WANTED WHERE YOU ARE AND SAN DIEGO NEEDS YOU. FALL IN LINE. BE MEN.[44]

In this context of increasing desire on both sides to bring the fight to a victorious conclusion, and amid the atmosphere of martyrdom among the Wobblies, the most notable themes in the Industrial Worker during April and May were the appeals to other workers to join the battle, and reminders of the need for labor solidarity against a lawless and brutal enemy bent on destroying all of labor. With slogans, poems, and cartoons, accounts of police and vigilante violence, and in homage to Hoey and Mikolasek, the Worker painted a picture of the fight as a brutal one which had to be won.

By its June 13 edition, the Worker was highlighting a call to action in an item telling workers to "Advertise San Diego," an all-caps review of the most violent attacks on I.W.W. members and their sympathizers in San Diego.[45]

Later, in its July 18 and July 25 issues, the Worker issued an appeal in the paper's "ears" on page 1, announcing "Men Wanted to March on San Diego," and "Join the Battle for Free Speech." At the same time, the Worker turned to a discussion of court cases pending as a result of arrests in the free speech confrontations. Highlighted in several issues in July and August was a case against 20 I.W.W. members, charged with conspiracy to commit murder May 7, when, in the police raid on I.W.W. headquarters in

which Joe Mikolasek died, a riot developed and two policemen were injured. By July 25, the Worker was claiming "SAN DIEGO CRIMES FORCE LABOR UNITY" in its front page account of developments in the conspiracy trial, and in reports of a street meeting held successfully by the Free Speech League at Sixth and E Streets.

Again, the appeal for funds and unified action appeared. And when a verdict was reached in the conspiracy case, finding six of the accused guilty, and releasing the others, the Worker used the occasion to print a lengthy chronological account of events in San Diego, beginning with the January 6 incident which led two days later to passage of the free speech ordinance.

In most cases, of course, trials of I.W.W. members were simply the outcome of the I.W.W.'s plan to cripple the judicial system by clogging the courts. In this instance, however, reports of the remarks of the convicted men as they were sentenced by the court also gave the Worker a chance to invoke once again a heroic image of workers confronting authority. In this way, class action was interwoven with class identity. August 15, a front-page account of the sentencing began defiantly:

> Proud and vital history in the class struggle was made when Judge Sloan sentenced the free speech fighters to imprisonment and fines because they had the audacity to attempt to make a legal test of the free speech ordinance in the capitalist courts. This was the first case, the feature trial, the legal measure of strength of the Free Speech and Anti-Free Speech forces. Class consciousness, solid, vigorous, defiant, placed the prisoners at the bar in triumphant attitude toward the court and the world and turned the magistrate on the bench into an apologist for the law.[46]

Among the statements quoted was that made by I.W.W. member Jack Whyte, who denounced the court procedures:

> I have seen workingmen brought into your courts and railroaded to the penitentiary. I have seen the rich go free. I am supposed to have a trial by jury of my peers. Did I have it? You sir, know I did not. My jury began with a multi-millionaire and

> and ran down to a few cockroaches. Are they my peers? Workingmen were kept off that jury. Your honor knows it. For that reason I ask no mercy. I am willing to take your sentence because I must, not because it was just. I have just ground to say, "To hell with your courts." I have better ground to express to you, sir, my unspeakable personal contempt.[47]

III. EPILOGUE: THE BATTLE DRAWS TO A CLOSE

There was a brief revival of hope for victory following the court's decision, as August 22, the Worker carried on its front page another call for men issued by the San Diego local's Publicity Committee. On August 29, the paper denounced the holding for trial of the men ultimately released in the conspiracy case, and used the matter to review once again the circumstances surrounding the arrests, including the death of Joe Mikolasek.

By September, the matter was clearly fading from the Worker's pages. In the September 12 issue, a small reference in an article on conditions in California once again stated that the free speech fight had been waged against all labor to prevent industrial workers from organizing, but by September 19, the San Diego situation received its last front page attention in an article about the efforts by San Diego authorities to find I.W.W. members guilty of dynamiting charges, and about a raid on the I.W.W. hall. Meanwhile, the I.W.W.'s Publicity Committee reported a resolution protesting Jack Whyte's treatment in jail (Whyte had been given bread and water for refusing to do construction work in prison). In the same article, the disbanding of the California Free Speech League was noted.

At summer's end, the Worker was devoting most of its coverage to other matters. On October 17, Laura Payne Emerson inveighed one more time against the lawlessness that she said still prevailed in San Diego:

> The Holy Ground between Fifth and Sixth, on E street, is vacant and lonely by night and by day. That sacred spot where so many

> I.W.W. were clubbed and arrested last winter lies safe and secure from the unhallowed tread of the hated anarchist, and in fact, from all other human beings. The street is paved, or grass would no doubt spring up in the midst thereof...
>
> ...So here we are in the midst of an organized band of thugs, legal and extra legal, who deny us all rights and privileges. Perhaps there is no country in the world or no spot in this country where club and gun, brute force and ignorance reign more supreme than here in San Diego.
>
> They have the courts, the jails and guns. What are we going to do about it?[48]

CONCLUSION

In Ames' study of radical newspapers, he called the content of those papers "strongly ideological, harsh and uncompromising,"[49] a description which aptly characterizes the Industrial Worker's coverage of the San Diego free speech fight. But, if the Worker's rhetoric was uncompromising, intemperate and sometimes overwrought, it was not, for the most part, inarticulate or inappropriate to the larger objectives of the I.W.W. and its supporters. The Wobblies' goals were revolutionary, although not violently revolutionary, so the Worker's hard line was understandable. In those terms, the San Diego free speech battle was just one more skirmish in the continuing class struggle. It was part of a war, and the Worker's coverage made that clear.

In that war, in a variety of ways, the Industrial Worker sought to "agitate, educate and organize"[50] its readers by appealing to their consciousness of the status and the concerns they shared with other members of the working class. The rhetoric of the Worker in the San Diego free speech fight therefore cultivated class consciousness by invoking identification with the class struggle, class causes and class actions, in appeals which usually wove together the different identifications. It was that kind of consciousness, in turn, which was crucial to the I.W.W.'s

larger effort of recruiting workers into the One Big Union, and to its goal of a worker-dominated society.

NOTES

1
See Robert H. Zieger, "Workers and Scholars: Recent Trends in American Labor Historiography," Labor History, XIII (Spring, 1972), 245-266; and David Brody, "The Old Labor History and the New: In Search of An American Working Class," Labor History, XX (Winter, 1979), 111-126.

2
E. J. Hobsbawm, "From Social History to the History of Society," in Historical Studies Today, ed. by Felix Gilbert and Stephen R. Graubard (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1972), 18.

3
William E. Ames, "The Northwest's Radical Labor Press: A Study in Access," paper presented to the AEJ West Coast Journalism Historians Conference, University of California at Berkeley, March, 1980.

4
Ibid., 6-8.

5
Of particular value as a source of information and interpretation for this study was Grace L. Miller, "The I.W.W. Free Speech Fight: San Diego, 1912," Southern California Quarterly, LIV (Fall, 1972), 211-238. Other important histories of the I.W.W. on which this paper has drawn are Philip S. Foner, History of the Labor Movement in the United States (New York: International Publishers Co., Inc., 1965), Vol. IV: The Industrial Workers of the World, 1905-1917; Paul Frederick Brissenden, The I.W.W.: A Study of American Syndicalism (New York: Columbia University, 1919); Fred Thompson, The I.W.W.: Its First Seventy Years (1905-1975) (Chicago: Industrial Workers of the World, 1976); Joseph Robert Conlin, Bread and Roses Too: Studies of the Wobblies (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Publishing Corporation, 1969). Specific free speech fights are discussed in Ronald Genini, "Industrial Workers of the World and their Fresno Free Speech Fight, 1910-1911," California Historical Quarterly, LIII (Summer, 1975), 101-114; Glen J. Broyles, "The Spokane Free Speech Fight, 1909-1910: A Study in I.W.W. Tactics," Labor History, XIX (Spring, 1978), 238-252.

6
William Preston, Jr., Aliens and Dissenters: Federal Suppression of Radicals 1903-1933 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963), 39-43.

7
Brissenden, op. cit., 365.

8
The ordinance and conditions and events surrounding its passage are well covered in Miller, loc. cit. 211-220; and Foner, op. cit., 194-196.

9
Foner, op. cit., 173-175; and Miller, loc. cit., 213

10
Miller, loc. cit., 231.

11
Foner, op. cit., 210-213.

12
Melvyn Dubofsky, "Industrial Worker: Spokane and Seattle, 1909-1918," in Joseph R. Conlin, The American Radical Press (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1974), 103-108.

13
Industrial Worker, December 7, 1911, p. 3.

14
Ibid.

15
Industrial Worker, February 8, 1912, p. 1.

16
Industrial Worker, February 15, 1912, p. 4.

17
Ibid.

18
Industrial Worker, February 22, 1912, p. 1.

19
Industrial Worker, February 29, 1912, p. 4.

20
Industrial Worker, March 14, 1912, p. 3.

21
His name was variously spelled Mickolasck, Mikolasck and Mikolasek by the Worker, which finally settled on "Mikolasek."

22
Industrial Worker, April 18, 1912, p. 2.

23
Industrial Worker, April 11, 1912, p. 1.

24 The controversial editorial, appearing in the March 4, 1912 issue of the San Diego Tribune, went on to say, "...they are absolutely useless in the human economy; they are the waste material of creation and should be drained off into the sewer of oblivion there to rot in cold obstruction like any other excrement."

25 Industrial Worker, April 11, 1912, p. 2.

26 Industrial Worker, June 6, 1912, p. 4.

27 Industrial Worker, July 4, 1912, p. 1.

28 Industrial Worker, July 11, 1912, p. 1.

29 Industrial Worker, May 1, 1912, p. 2.

30 Industrial Worker, February 22, 1912, p. 1.

31 Industrial Worker, March 7, 1912, p. 1.

32 Industrial Worker, March 21, 1912, p. 2.

33 Industrial Worker, April 11, 1912, p. 4.

34 Ibid.

35 Industrial Worker, May 30, 1912, p. 4.

36 Industrial Worker, June 6, 1912, p. 1.

37 Industrial Worker, July 18, 1912, p. 2.

38 Industrial Worker, February 22, 1912, p. 4.

39 Industrial Worker, February 29, 1912, p. 4.

40 Industrial Worker, March 7, 1912, p. 1.

41 Industrial Worker, March 14, 1912, p. 3.

42 Industrial Worker, March 28, 1912, p. 1.

43 Ibid.

44 Industrial Worker, April 18, 1912, p. 4.

45 Industrial Worker, June 13, 1912, p. 4.

46 Industrial Worker, August 15, 1912, p. 1.

47 Ibid, p. 4.

48 Industrial Worker, October 17, 1912, p. 3.

49 Ames, op. cit., p. 23.

50 "Agitate - Educate - Organize" was an I.W.W. slogan displayed prominently as a banner headline across the top of the page in virtually every issue of the Worker during this period.